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SUBJECT: ENGAGING JORDAN ON REDIRECTION OF IRAQI WMD SCIENTISTS

#### Summary

1. (SBU) Anne Harrington, Deputy Director of the Office of Proliferation Threat Reduction (NP/PTR), Richard Jarvis, PTR's Iraq Program Manager, and Amman's ESTH Hub Director visited several Amman-based NGOs to discuss their possible collaboration with State's program to redirect Iraqi WMD scientists to civilian, non-weapons work. Accompanying the State Department team was Dr. Esmail Shubber, an Iraqi biologist who had previously worked on Iraqi bio-weapons programs and is now an active participant in State's redirection program. End Summary.

#### Meeting Goals:

2. (SBU) A primary goal of the Amman meetings was to identify potential partners for projects currently being proposed by former Iraqi WMD scientists which would employ those and other scientists in tackling problems in the areas of the environment, water, public health and agriculture. With the relative ease of access to Amman from both Iraq and the U.S., the Jordanian capital is a convenient venue for the interaction of Iraqi scientists and their western counterparts in the effort to utilize Iraqi scientific and technical expertise on the many tasks of national reconstruction. The team was also seeking to identify possible venues to host redirection workshops and training programs, including facilities that could support laboratory-based training.

#### Meeting Highlights

3. (SBU) The State team visited the Jordanian Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC), and the World Conservation Union (aka IUCN) on January 31, and the Amman headquarters of the U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP) on February 1.

Royal Scientific Society (RSS) - [www.rss.gov.jo](http://www.rss.gov.jo)

4. (SBU) Royal Society President Dr. Sa'ad al-Hijazi, and senior RSS staff received the State team on RSS's 85-acre research campus in Amman. Hijazi has been active in the Jordanian and regional scientific community and was formerly a university president in Jordan for 15 years. He offered to work with the redirection program to help meet any Iraqi and regional training needs.

5. (U) RSS is a non-profit NGO established in 1970. Its income is derived from a number of revenue-generating activities, including quality assurance testing and other technical services, studies, research projects and training. It also receives some funds from the Jordanian government and local governmental organizations, and by providing technical services to other governments, and regional and international organizations. The research staff numbers just over 600 and at the end of 2003, RSS had assets valued at USD 28 million, which includes a USD 2.8 million endowment. RSS has 38 laboratories, 18 of which are internationally accredited, and works with an extensive number of U.S., European and regional universities, accreditation programs and scientific centers.

6. (U) The Society's chief fields of expertise include: building technology; environmental assessment studies; water harvesting; hazardous and solid waste management; water quality assessment; air quality management and control; information technology; chemical analysis; testing and calibration; non-destructive assay; radiation monitoring; physical, chemical and mechanical characterization of metals, plastics, food materials and products; quality control and product certification; design and manufacture; and maintenance and repair of medical equipment. Dr. al-Hijazi highlighted RSS's role in providing all quality assurance testing for the government (quality assurance lab certified according to ISO 9002:2000) and that RSS is responsible for maintenance and repair of all Ministry of Health equipment. RSS has a close working relationship with the Japanese and under their assistance arrangement, the Japanese will be

upgrading the quality assurance labs in the next four months. In addition to working with Japan, RSS also works with Germany.

17. (U) RSS conducts a lot of training, particularly in environment, building sector issues, information technology, engineering, chemical analysis, and quality assurance. The National Calibration center works with technical centers on primary and secondary testing and analysis equipment.

18. (SBU) Hijazi indicated his strong willingness to work with the redirection program and agreed to meet with State's Baghdad-based Program Director, Dr. Peter Smallwood in the near future to continue discussion and to work out specific details of ways RSS could assist with training programs, workshops and conferences.

Cooperative Monitoring Center, Amman (CMC) -  
[www.cmc-amman.gov.jo](http://www.cmc-amman.gov.jo)

19. (SBU) CMC director General Mohamed Shiyyab was out of town and the team was briefed by Head of Administration Amani Abu Ruqa'a, system engineer Iyad Aldasouqi, and assistant engineer Tareq Shridah, who explained the CMC programs and gave a tour of the cooperative monitoring technology demonstration area. The CMC is housed in the RSS administration building and can draw on the RSS expertise and facilities.

110. (U) CMC's main activities include workshops, research and analysis, and technology development and collaborations for monitoring security situations. CMC also serves as a data gathering center for several regional programs that may be relevant to the redirection program. For example, its Middle East Meteorological System (MEMS) could add meteorological sentinel stations in Iraq to the existing sub-regional system and share resulting MEMS regional data with Iraq. CMC also does some sub-regional disease reporting data collection that might be able to include Iraqi inputs.

World Conservation Union, aka  
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

111. (SBU) IUCN ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)) is an international organization devoted to biodiversity conservation. It tries to enhance governance and civil society through environmental conservation. The Amman office, IUCN WESCANA, covers 26 countries in three regions: Central Asia, West Asia, and North Africa. The team met with Regional Director Dr. Odeh al-Jayyousi and Simon Anstey, Senior Advisor responsible for the Central Asia region.

112. (U) IUCN programs in West Asia include working with Yemen and Oman to develop National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; protected areas programs in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon; biodiversity capacity building in Kuwait; and water resources management in Jordan.

113. (U) Iraq was an IUCN member in the early '80s with the Academy of Sciences, University of Baghdad, and government offices being involved. IUCN would like to see Iraq involved again, but that would require some official entity being able to assume responsibility for paying annual dues. Dr. Shubber undertook to pass materials to officials in Baghdad and encourage their consideration of renewing Iraq's membership. In the meanwhile, IUCN would be happy to participate in workshops and other activities that are consistent with its mandate.

114. (U) Of particular interest to IUCN is its special project for post-conflict countries that currently covers Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Palestine and Afghanistan. For obvious reasons, IUCN can't do one project for all and is planning several projects, but would like to look at whether it is possible to have a Kuwait-Iraq project. Kuwait already is working on the issue and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has already done some good work, according to the IUCN representatives. IUCN was sensitive to the political issues involved, but hoped that a collaboration on the scientific level might be possible. This would be a 4-year plan to study the ecological impact of war on those two countries.

115. (U) IUCN also can help Iraq develop a national biodiversity action plan, has knowledge-learning modules (distance-based), and is interested in a medium-term project on water governance focusing on the Tigris-Euphrates, potentially involving also Turkey and Syria.

A question on Tajikistan

16. (SBU) Mr. Anstey brought to the U.S. team's attention a situation he came across during a recent visit to the Tajik 'handle,' near Uzbekistan. The town of Khojand was a center for uranium extraction during the Soviet period. According to Anstey there still are direct flights between Khojand and Moscow. He heard rumors that there is a massive underground uranium mining and processing facility there, which is no longer managed by anyone. The townspeople are very concerned about the situation, including possible health effects, and that there may be attempts by others to obtain either material or expertise. Anstey asked if we could look into whether the Science Centers program (redirecting former Soviet scientists) was aware of the situation and if anything might be done to investigate and/or remediate the situation. (NOTE: On consulting with NP/PTR, we established that there is a recent Science Center proposal for uranium contamination assessment in Tajikistan that may relate to the reports IUCN brought to our attention.)

UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) -  
<http://postconflict.unep.ch>

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17. (SBU) Henrik Slotte, Head of the Post-Conflict Assessment Unit in Geneva, flew to Amman to join Koen Toonen, the Iraq Program Manager for the meeting with the State team. After a brief history of the post-conflict unit and description of some of the environment work done in the Balkans, Slotte and Toonen described Iraq as their largest project to date, receiving support from Japan, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, and others. The Iraq activities are funded primarily through the Iraq Trust Fund, which currently supports two projects: USD 11 million for marsh rehabilitation (Japan) and USD 2.7 million for capacity building. The latter has supported a number of workshops to support environmental law and governance, environmental impact assessments, environmental management, and environmental site assessment training. Training has been done in Geneva, Spiez (Switzerland), and other locations for small groups of scientists who went back to Iraq to do field collection work. The UNEP representative gave no details on who the scientists were or where they are working. They did clarify that they work only with the Iraqi Ministry of Environment, which is responsible for nominating all candidates for UNEP's training programs.

18. (SBU) The U.S. team described the Iraq redirection efforts, emphasizing an interest in steering project funding to environmental issues and offering to work with UNEP to provide the scientific and technical capability needed to carry out field work. Dr. Shubber presented his proposal on assaying health and environmental risks in the Tuwaitha area. The UNEP response was lukewarm at best. Slotte spoke at length about a new project for which there is no funding yet, but for which he indicated substantial support, to look at the depleted uranium situation in southern Iraq. He spoke of previous, similar efforts in the Balkans and said that Baghdad has asked UNEP to do this work and that UNEP, while acknowledging that the seriousness of the problem posed by depleted uranium has not yet been determined, considers it a priority.

19. (SBU) The U.S. team asked if UNEP would be interested in being involved in the Tuwaitha project, noting its potential for addressing a possibly important problem. Slotte responded that he understood that Greenpeace had done a study that might cover the issue. On the matter of convening a workshop to look at the issue and review the current status of assessments, UNEP encouraged us to accelerate the timing and find a date earlier than August for the workshop, but was otherwise non-committal. (NOTE: Subsequent to the visit, UNEP followed up with direct contact with Drs. Shubber and Smallwood in Baghdad, indicating interest in remaining in contact. END NOTE)

20. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
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